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AN
ADDRESS
DELIVERED BEFORE THE MEMBERS
OF THE
ANACOSTIA LYCEUM,
AND
VISITERS,

"UPON THE NATURE AND OBJECTS OF THAT SOCIETY;"

ON THE
Evening of the 6th January, 1835.

BY
THE PRESIDENT OF THAT INSTITUTION.

38
✓
He that, with well selected books, can blend
The varied converse of a polish'd friend,
Delighted drinks of rich and deep supplies,
That from th' o'erflowing springs of knowledge rise.

C. T. Costu



WASHINGTON CITY:
PRINTED BY DUFF GREEN.
1835.

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WASHINGTON, December 13, 1834.

"*Resolved*, That the President of the Anacostia Lyceum be, and he is hereby requested to deliver an address upon the nature and objects of this society, on such evening of the regular meetings of the society as may suit his convenience, and that the public be invited to attend."

SIR: I have the satisfaction of communicating to you the foregoing resolution, unanimously adopted at a meeting of the members of the Anacostia Lyceum.

Most respectfully, yours,

J. L. CLUBB, *Secretary A. L.*

To CLEMENT T. COOTE, *President Anacostia Lyceum.*

WASHINGTON, December 15, 1834.

DEAR SIR: Your favor of 13th instant duly reached my hands, and, although I regret the society did not make a more suitable choice, it will afford me pleasure to attempt the fulfilment of their request, upon as early a day as may comport with my other engagements.

I am, dear sir, yours obediently,

CLEMENT T. COOTE.

To J. LEWIS CLUBB, Esq., *Secretary A. L.*

WASHINGTON, January 7, 1835.

SIR: In compliance with a resolution passed by the Anacostia Lyceum last evening, I would respectfully request a copy of the address delivered by you upon the nature and objects of the institution, for the purpose of publication.

Yours, respectfully,

P. M. PEARSON, *1st Vice President.*

To CLEMENT T. COOTE, Esq., *President A. L.*

WASHINGTON, January 12, 1835.

SIR: At the request of the members of the Anacostia Lyceum, I herewith transmit to you a copy of the address which they desire, with a sincere wish that a thirst for knowledge may be generally excited, especially in the minds of young persons, and that the public attention may be usefully directed to the objects of that institution.

I am, sir, yours truly,

CLEMENT T. COOTE.

To P. M. PEARSON, Esq., *1st Vice President A. L.*

Rev. O. B. Brown
with the sincere regards of
The Author.

ADDRESS, &c.

AT the unanimous request of the members of the "Anacostia Lyceum," who, by an expression flattering to my feelings, have been pleased to call me, for a season, to preside over that institution, I appear before you upon this occasion. In attempting to discharge the duty imposed upon me, which circumstance is to be ascribed to the partiality and kindness of feeling on the part of my friends, rather than to their deliberate judgment, I am fully sensible that, to cover the imperfections of omission and of commission which will disclose themselves in the present address, will require the broad and expanding mantle even of *their* liberality to be greatly extended.

Upon reflecting that the most capacious understandings and the highest cultivated minds have been directed, not only to the accumulation of knowledge, but also to its diffusion, and to impress the importance of its acquisition, by every argument their wisdom could suggest, and by every fascination which their imagination or their genius could supply, my mind shrinks from the undertaking, consciously unequal to the task. But, under the consideration that the members of this association were united together upon a tacit acknowledgment, at least, of their own deficiencies—of the importance of knowledge, and showing thereby a sincere desire to acquire it, have presented to me an encouragement to submit, upon this occasion, some inducements for them to persevere in the course they have chosen for its general diffusion. I wish also to infuse the same spirit of inquiry in the minds of others who have not seen its importance, or may not hitherto have desired the advantage and satisfaction of its more extensive enjoyment. By experience we not only learn wisdom, but we are also taught our ignorance.

Man, as a creature, is pre-eminently distinguished by his Creator from all other organized beings upon this mundane sphere, by the peculiar and harmonious combination of his form, in which are united strength and beauty, grace and dignity; and also by his upright and absolute station. By the latter, he is able, at once, to look upon the earth from whence he sprang, obedient to the all-creating voice, and from which silent, but perfect laboratory, his physical wants are all supplied; and also to gaze upon the heavens above, where the *Infinite Intelligence*, the eternal fountain of his intelligence resides. To that *uncreated, all-pervading energy*, it is the peculiar privilege and glory of his rational faculties, when directed aright, to aspire; their *original* and their only *perfect* and *happy destination*.

Thus formed, and thus distinguishingly honored stood our *great progenitor*, when he was promptly required to exercise his heaven-inspired knowledge, and his *heaven-taught language*; for, at the bidding of the Almighty maker, the lower orders of being, "the cattle, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, were summoned to pass before "their heaven-crowned king;" not merely as indicative of their submission to his divine right to rule them, but that he should confer upon each, after their kind, a characteristic name, by which they should be thereafter distinguished. God anticipated a sanction of the propriety of the names which would be conferred, by the declaration, "whatsoever Adam shall call them, that shall be the name thereof." Hence, we clearly perceive that the spirit of God not only endowed man with understanding, knowledge, and judgment to appreciate the wisdom of the works of his hand, but that he also gave him a *language*, by which he should communicate that knowledge, and the ideas associated therewith, to his posterity. Plato maintains, and the Egyptians had the same opinion, that the original language of man was of divine formation; and when he divided words into two classes, the primitive

and the derivative, he attributed the latter to the ingenuity of man, and the former to the communication of the Supreme Being.

The works of all-creating wisdom, power, and goodness, were therefore the first objects upon which the reason of the first man was directed, *by his Maker*, to exercise itself; and although these works are yet but little understood, they are still daily published resplendently in *every language*; they are *still seen*, and *partially read*, with *admiration* and *wonder* in *every land*. Six thousand years have nearly elapsed since, in characters of light, the first impression was given upon the globe which we inhabit; and every method which the most expanded and scrutinizing human intelligences could devise has since been resorted to, to analyze their component parts, and display the causes of their peculiar conformation, yet their efforts have scarcely proceeded farther than the title page, upon which is indelibly inscribed “*The works of God.*”

These perfect productions of the Supreme Being are therefore still presented for the *use*, and are open to the investigation of man, in their pristine forms of unsullied beauty. Although there are *none* of *us* weak enough to suppose that *we* shall proceed farther in discovering the secret processes of the Almighty “in these his lower works,” even when aided by the recorded experiments of other days, yet there is this peculiar and practical advantage which will result from such an effort: we shall, at every successive step, bring to our assistance some accession to our stock of knowledge, which will tend to our individual satisfaction, and may result in benefit to the community. The highest acquisitions to which the mind can aspire are to obtain some knowledge of the works of its Creator, an extensive acquaintance with which surrounds and contains almost every ennobling variety of human attainment; while such knowledge, even in a very limited degree, of the causes which, in the economy of nature, produce such

a perpetual and ever varying scene of perfection, must tend to elevate the soul, and dignify the character of man.

To the labors of some of the sages of antiquity, but more especially to the researches of philosophy and the advancement of scientific knowledge during the last century, now so cheaply and so extensively spread as they are by the art of printing, we are mainly indebted for the facilities which are given us, by the order and classification which prevail in every department of natural and experimental philosophy, every branch of the fine arts, the sciences, and general literature.

We must stand without excuse, therefore, if we neglect the acquisition of knowledge, and remain entirely ignorant of the elements of matter, and of some of the causes which produce the infinitude of blessings that are perpetually resulting from their varied and endless combinations and modifications, which are inviting our attention on every hand. Such knowledge will not puff up the mind with a vain conceit of its superior intelligence, but will rather produce humility, from a sense of our comparative ignorance; and will have a tendency to inspire a manly dignity, a modest carriage, and a conciliatory deportment. A mind so disposed will find the works of the Creator incessantly opening to his inquiries certain *qualities* and *properties* which before lay concealed from his view. To acquire this interesting knowledge, however, demands *industrious application*. An enlightened understanding is a mind stored with just ideas, collected as a bee gathereth honey, ranging from flower to flower; a large variety of these ideas are necessary to constitute proper and extensive views of a subject; and the more we reflect upon the present state of society, the various faculties of the human mind, and the incalculable advantages which will result from acquiring an ample fund of valuable ideas, the more we shall be convinced of the utility of being engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, as far as practicable, consistent with our particular callings and situations in life.

By this course only can we be qualified to blend manly and serious topics, having a reference to the *works of nature, science, and art*, and the affairs of human life, with the sallies of light and gay conversation.

It will be found, also, that the more ideas we acquire in common, the sooner are our preconceived prejudices removed, and the greater congeniality of opinion will prevail; we shall *rise higher* in the esteem of each other, and the *pleasures of social intercourse* will ripen into sentiments of regard and friendship. In the association of persons where "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" prevail, those individuals who unite a knowledge of the world with a store of general ideas and rational principles, which well chosen books and frequent communication with persons of intelligence can supply, will render themselves the most acceptable to their associates, and the most valuable companions.

It has been said by a wise and philosophic observer of mankind, that "a *man always* makes himself *greater* as he *increases* in *knowledge*; that there is nothing so minute but that he would rather know it than not, in the same manner that all power, of whatever sort, is desirable; that a desire of knowledge is natural to mankind; and that every human being in a right mind will be willing to give all that he has to obtain knowledge."

It is a matter of curious interest to observe how a discovery, or an extension of any particular stream of knowledge, opens the course for the increase of other currents of knowledge immediately or remotely connected therewith.

The geographer, having demonstrated the form and extent of the globe which we inhabit, sketches certain regular, but imaginary lines upon the surface of the model of its miniature representative, by which he divides it into latitudes and longitudes; classing certain portions of such divisions into zones and climates, he defines with precision the various parts which are habitable, adding discoveries as they are made.

by the bold navigator, from time to time, and their relative distances from each other, denominating them continents, islands, &c.: uniting the *science* of *cosmography*, he demonstrates the causes of the interesting succession of light and darkness, and the variety and regularity of the seasons.

The botanist succeeds the geographer, and by his peculiar skill, and the lucid method of *class*, *order*, *genera*, and *species*, which he has adopted to divide the vegetable kingdom, he discloses that, in all the variegated arrangement, there is a peculiar adaptation in the productions of nature to the necessities of man and other animals, in that climate especially to which they are indigenuous. By his knowledge, upon the examination of any object within the range of his science, he can inform you of its useful or injurious properties; in what part of the plant they each reside—the root, the stem, the leaves, or the fruit; designating the portion which is valuable as subsistence for man, and in what part is contained its medicinal virtue, or other qualities which may be destructive of animal life. His knowledge extends also to the character of the soil and the climate which produces each variety in its greatest perfection. How important and valuable is the practical detail of such knowledge to the agriculturist, the horticulturist, and the florist! In the latter class, although they may appear to us not so useful, variety and beauty have played their finest freaks, and it is to this class I should like more especially to direct the attention of the ladies; the nursing and cultivation of so lovely a family, is a task most interestingly adapted to their assiduous care. A poet, whose *garden* was his *inspiration* and his *theme*, and who with peculiar propriety could compliment and make his call upon the fair, having completed so beautiful and so various a “Task” at their solicitation, has said, in commendation of such a charge,

“Oh! give a poet leave to recommend,
A poet fond of nature, and your friend,
Her beauteous works to cultivate and view:
Her works must needs excel—who fashioned you.”

The skilful botanist not only produces each plant and flower in the greatest perfection, but in almost every class he increases their varieties, changes their fragrance, and multiplies their beauties, even beyond the boast of the creative powers of fancy. What an endless and interesting variety is contained in a knowledge of this science! How valuable in its application! How closely connected with the well-being, and how conducive to the pleasures, conveniences, and almost essential to the subsistence of man!

In a national view, the pursuits of agriculture, and every mode of rendering the earth productive, are superior to commerce, as a source of good and permanent power; for the population, and also the commerce of a country, are necessarily limited by the subsistence and other productions which the earth yields by proper scientific cultivation.

The Historian of Animated Nature enters upon the same divisions in that interesting branch of knowledge, and proceeds, as the zoologist, the ornothologist, the entimologist, &c., to show the *class*, the *genus*, and the *species*, into which all organized beings are subdivided, with the detailed characteristics of form, habits, and instincts, and the manner in which they are rendered subservient to the purposes of their creation, and to the interests, conveniences, or luxuries of man; displaying also the wisdom of providence in their adaptation to human wants, in the climate where each species most abounds.

The *mineralogist* and *metallurgist* next succeed in this course, but they descend generally below the surface of the soil. They apply their tests, and scrutinize with care; classify the various productions of the interior of the world, and assign each in their cabinet to its proper department. The chemist assays a part of these discoveries to ascertain their medical properties; and the artizan applies the metallic substances to the ornamental or useful purposes to which they each may

be more especially adapted. Without this knowledge, the most precious as well as the most useful metals would have slumbered in their obscurity; and man would have been deprived of the value of their application to all the purposes of the useful arts, the sciences, every practical branch of knowledge, and all the conveniences and elegancies of life.

The chemist, by his knowledge, is enabled practically to ascertain in some degree the effects produced by the various combinations of matter; its composition, decomposition, and recomposition; the orders, classes, and affinities into which they are divided, in order to analyze the various animal, vegetable, and mineral substances submitted to the separating and resolving tests of his examination, by which he produces results which expand his own sphere of knowledge, makes discoveries that are invaluable, discovers that which is invaluable to the community, in their various and endless application to the sciences, and to the purposes of domestic economy. He also tortures every production of nature to obtain their medicinal virtues, in order to alleviate or stop the ravages of disease. But how little we yet *know* of the *grand chemical laboratory of nature*, which is *silently* and *unceasingly* proceeding throughout all the *families of animated beings*, and all the *tribes of inanimated nature*, that, by the invariable laws of affinities, composition and assimilation, are disclosing themselves only in their effects, by sustaining a *WORLD OF LIFE*, and *spreading* over the *earth* a *robe of transcendent variety and beauty*, and unfolding *scenes of unparalleled and never ceasing wonders*.

The philosophic traveller proceeds, in his turn, and examines the manners, customs, policy, laws, religion, social condition, political and domestic economy, form of government, arts, agriculture and manufactures, and whatever may tend to designate the rank which the inhabitants of any portion of the world are entitled to hold in the scale of knowledge and refinement, and the station they occupy in the relative rank of the social and polished existence of nations.

The mathematician, in the pure and mixed branches of his knowledge, but more especially in the extension of his powers, as applied to astronomical investigation and discoveries, opens, to the aspiring mind, an infinite expanse of never-failing interest; the nature, number, and extent of the planetary system, which astonish beyond measure. In the mighty system of the universe, we, in the place our planet occupies in the solar system, can only glance at those worlds upon worlds, those systems upon systems, which are scattered through infinite space; we are compelled to acknowledge how little we know of the works of the Omnipotent Architect of the universe. The *astronomer* demonstrates, by the knowledge he opens to our minds, that, in all the mighty plans, as well as in the minute objects subjected to our examination, the same wondrous order, regularity, and system prevail, unchangeable by any human effort; that not only the sun knows "the time of his rising," and the "moon and stars their courses," but the precise periods when their light, to a portion of our planet, shall be intercepted by the transit of some interposing body, which is only pursuing the path predetermined by its Maker, when it was first commanded into its orbit. Comets, also, which only approach the range of the telescopic eye at longer intervals, and to our apprehension perhaps at uncertain periods, are but performing their amazing revolutions agreeably to the purpose of his unerring will who first projected them in their spheres; who still guides them with infinite precision by his own laws of motion, which we denominate gravitation, projection, and the centripetal and centrifugal impulses and attractions, leaving no visible track in their path through the boundless infinitude of space.

"Lo! these are *part* of HIS ways, but how small a portion is known of HIM."

I have recurred only to a few of the numerous divisions of knowledge into which the ingenuity of man has classed the

works of his Maker; and have adverted briefly to the advantages which have resulted, and which will continue to result, to the social relations of man, by a general acquisition of such knowledge. The animal, vegetable, mineral, and fossil kingdoms still contain regions never yet inspected by the hallowed eye of philosophic scrutiny. Astronomy and natural history are mediums by which our knowledge of the Creator is greatly enlarged; but the astronomer often lays aside his telescope, and the natural historian his microscope, in astonishment and adoration.

Upon this occasion it would perhaps be improper to detain your attention to other inducements which would present themselves, by pursuing further the importance of the knowledge to be obtained by searching the works of nature: they invite your diligence, industry, and perseverance, and will richly repay your toils. The indolent will never attempt such investigations, and will remain ignorant of the value of their own powers; but the mind that directs its efforts to the hill of knowledge will find, as he ascends, the prospect around him increase in interest and beauty: like a persevering traveller, who is advancing to the summit of a lofty mountain, the pressure of the atmosphere will be found to diminish as he rises; he will see those beneath him in the valley surrounded by ignis fatuus and fogs, while he is cheered with a bright and boundless horizon, and enjoys the increasing radiance of increasing knowledge.

There are other considerations, and some which, to American citizens, will present powerful inducements for the acquisition of knowledge.

What was the principle which raised the celebrated nations of other times to such a pitch of honor, dominion, and renown? Was it not a system of laws *wisely* adapted to the genius of the people, and *persisted* in, without deviation from the original principles of each respective constitution? Was it not the peculiar spirit of their wise establishments? (And wisdom

is but the proper application of large acquisitions of knowledge.) This knowledge inspired their minds with noble sentiments, and directed their conduct through successive generations.

This spirit reigned among the Persians, the brave and virtuous companions of the elder Cyrus; and the same spirit imparted its influence to the Greeks and Romans of the purest times. I may confidently ask, is it not the same or rather a superior spirit which has raised America to the eminence which she has attained among modern nations?

Has it not fostered the valor of her heroes, the wisdom of her philosophers, the sagacity of her statesmen; and will it not foster the ingenuity of her artists? Has it not prompted her sons to such "deeds of noble daring" as have cast a *halo* of *glory* around their names, which no *clouds* of *envy* can *obscure*, no power of oblivion can ever extinguish? Let this *indispensable* and invaluable truth be indelibly impressed upon our minds, and instilled into the minds of succeeding generations, that the honor of the American character—the stability of American institutions, must depend upon religion, virtue, and an extensive diffusion of knowledge as their best, their only support. Every patriotic citizen will, therefore, be anxious, by every expedient in his power, to increase and deepen the channels which may convey the most interesting and comprehensive mode of acquiring and increasing knowledge, as the only permanent basis of the general prosperity and the glory of his country.

If the *truly noble* distinctions which knowledge confers are desirable, cultivate the acquaintance of the intelligent, accomplished, and well disposed; disregard the solicitations of the idle, and resist the allurements of the dissipated; meditate frequently upon the actions, and drink copiously of the streams of knowledge which flow in the works of departed genius, "and hold high converse with the mighty dead." These habits will strengthen proper resolutions, animate and

inspire new ardor, and increase alacrity in the cultivation of every moral and intellectual excellence.

Upon surveying the world, we find nothing great or laudable, nothing splendid or permanent can be effected without *diligence* and *exertion*. The acquirements of *learning*, and the *monuments* of *glory* are to be referred alone to their *animating influence*. We should never be wearied in using the means by which the mind may be directed in the acquisition of knowledge.

If we turn to the history of our own country, we shall find characters illustrious for their wisdom, their science, and their valor; for their successful experiments in philosophy, their researches in natural history, and for their power of eloquence; they were men favored by nature with masculine understandings, which they cultivated, and produced ripe and profound judgments. They were remarkable, also, for plainness and simplicity of manners; honoring worth, and raising merit from the lowest station. Need I cite before your minds *him* who was first in the camp, first in council, first in the affection of his country; and whose character will, in the pages of the future historian, shine the brightest exemplar of true greatness that will be recorded in the annals of mankind?

Gaze upon the illustrious names which adorn the declaration of the rights of our country, and the rights of man. In diplomacy, in natural and experimental philosophy, hail the genius and wisdom of Franklin; in the higher branches of mathematics and astronomy, gaze at the deep and exploring mind of Rittenhouse; in practical mechanics, Fulton; in the various departments of natural history, view the interesting and scientific labors of Goodman, of Wilson, and of Say; in oratory, look at the powers of Adams, of Henry, of Wirt, and a host beside; while Clay, Webster, Everett, and others are still taking the heart captive in the fascinating charms of their eloquence. In every department of literature we are enabled

to look with patriotic pleasure upon the names of individuals who have exalted the honor of our country—stars of the first magnitude in the galaxy of knowledge, and whom the best intelligence of other lands have delighted to honor. What more can be desired to fill the measure of our ambition, but that a succession of such men should multiply in every succeeding age, to sustain, untarnished, the glory of their country, in every thing *great* in *arts* and *arms*, and in every *variety* of *human knowledge*!

I am fully aware that a library, embracing standard as well as more modern works in the comprehensive branches of useful, scientific, and ornamental knowledge, to which I have only partially adverted, would be utterly beyond the means of persons in the middle stations of life. The members of the “Anacostia Lyceum,” who are under the same impression, but who have a desire to remove so great an impediment to the extension of the means of the increase of knowledge, have associated themselves together for the purpose of founding an institution, in which there shall be gradually formed a library, which shall be composed of valuable standard works in every department of useful and ornamental knowledge; also of modern works, having a reference to new discoveries in science, improvements in the arts, in history, biography, travels, voyages, poetry, general and polite literature; and also to receive, regularly, some of the ablest conducted and most interesting periodicals of the present day, that they may have access to a perpetual stream of intelligence, adequate to assuage their thirst of knowledge, at least so far as to keep pace with the growing intelligence of the age.

This *primary* and most important feature in their arrangement is now in the charge of a committee, denominated “the Library Committee,” of which the librarian is, ex-officio, a member. That committee has been already appointed for the present year, which will expire upon the anniversary of the institution, the 22d day of February next, at which period an

appointment will be again made, and annually thereafter. The works which are intended to be introduced into the library of the Lyceum will be in the English language. It would be superfluous to have recourse to argument in favor of such an arrangement, upon this occasion, as that language has so long been, and will for ever remain (for it is now spoken by nearly one-ninth part of the inhabitants of the world) the vehicle of productions most eminently distinguished for *genius*, *taste*, *learning*, and *science*.

“If we open the volumes of divines, philosophers, historians, or artists, we find terms employed to communicate with precision the ideas they intended to convey, and to express their views on any subject completely. It is distinguished by its energy and its copiousness. In the works of Shakespeare, Spencer, Milton, Dryden, and Pope, it is evident they employ a phraseology which may be called the *language of the Muses*. The genius of the English language enables the poet, by figures of speech, to give to inanimate objects the most beautiful personification, and to produce the most striking effect. In the details of the historian, the arguments of the politician and the divine, the speculations of the philosopher, and the invention of the epic, tragic, and lyric poet, the English is without a rival in any living language.”

The *secondary* feature of the arrangement made by the members of this institution, has been to set apart one evening in every week for a meeting of the society, upon which occasion the discussion of some question of general interest, which shall have been chosen at the previous meeting, takes place, as a medium, in accordance with their views, of diffusing knowledge; but the subject of debate is not permitted to interfere with the politics of party, or with the peculiarities of religious creeds or opinions. Every member has an opportunity of contributing to the stock of questions to be discussed, out of which stock the moderator who may have been appointed to preside at the next meeting selects two, and, by vote,

the society decides which of them shall be the subject for discussion at the next meeting.

The subscription entitling a member to the privilege both of attending the weekly meetings under the regulations of the society and participating in the debates, is *twenty-five cents per month*, payable monthly. The society have adopted a constitution and by-laws for its government, and the members will be happy to receive additions to their number, being now about thirty, of such persons who feel the importance and see the advantages which may result from such a local institution, remote from the facilities and support which are given to such associations in the more densely populated parts of this city. Applications for that purpose can be made at the close of the present meeting, or be communicated through the medium of the members of the society, who are known generally in this section of the city. Donations of any interesting works from persons who are friendly to the objects contemplated will be peculiarly acceptable, through the hands of any member; and a record of such countenance and liberality will be duly made upon the journal of "the Anacostia Lyceum."

Among other advantages which the present enjoys over any former age, are certainly to be reckoned the establishment of *public libraries, public lectures, and debating societies*. It may be fairly, and I think justly attributed to these advantages by which knowledge has been so rapidly and so extensively spread, that so many important improvements in almost every useful art and science have taken place in our times. The methods adopted in other countries for this important object, the spread of knowledge, may not perhaps be generally known, but they show the *estimation* in which a *general diffusion of knowledge* is held, and the *methods* used for its *acquisition*, which are not dissimilar to our own. I will briefly state *them* and *their effects*, as they may invite others to unite with us in promoting so *great a good*.

In the city of Glasgow, in Scotland, where the system of public libraries and public lectures were first introduced, it is found that, instead of mechanics and journeymen weavers meeting their fellow workmen in clubs and taverns, and there spending their time and their earnings in intoxication and riot, they now, at the conclusion of the labors of the week, return home to their families, change their clothing, and go respectably dressed to the public lecture room, to which the subscription is about three-pence per week, or six cents, and they are there instructed, by a well digested discourse, upon some useful branch of art or science. The effect produced by this course has been, that within a few years the great body of the weavers and mechanics in that place have become well informed men, often wiser than their employers.

Another, and somewhat better mode has obtained in England. "The Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge," at the head of which is the late Lord Chancellor Brougham, commission lecturers to travel through the kingdom with well *selected locomotive libraries*, which are conveyed in vehicles adapted to the purpose, for cheap distribution. The person in charge of the establishment gives public lectures in country towns and villages on the subject of the useful arts and sciences. By these methods the benefits of knowledge are greatly extended, and the advantages resulting to the society are incalculable; a taste for the acquisition, both by reading and hearing, is extensively and cheaply diffused, the beneficial effects of which are *felt* and *seen* on every hand.

Our wise and patriotic *Franklin* saw and appreciated the advantages which would result to a community from a public library, as *one* of the best means of directing the public taste and of diffusing knowledge. Hence the foundation of the Philadelphia Library is to be ascribed to him.

The *advantages of debating societies*, when well conducted, are obvious. They have the double effect of eliciting and communicating knowledge. To young persons especially they

are peculiarly advantageous; for no one can know his mental powers until he can compare them with others. Those powers, like the physical powers of the body, are strengthened and greatly improved by exercise. There is perhaps nothing so well calculated to check presumption and over-confidence in our opinions, as by comparing them candidly and fairly, which an ingenuous mind will do, with the thoughts and opinions of others.

Language, by which the Creator has distinguished our race, as well as by reason, from *other creatures*, is designed as the *vehicle* by which *our ideas* are to be conveyed from mind to mind: he who reads, therefore, merely to collect ideas in his own brains, and bottles up his thoughts from his associates, deprives them of one important medium of knowledge, and robs himself of more than one half the rewards of his labor. But where an association of individuals introduce their acquisitions of new ideas in colloquial discourse, they each give to others, and receive from others the benefit of their collective acquirements.

“Hast thou *no friend to set thy mind abroad?*

Good sense will stagnate: thoughts shut up want air,

And spoil, like bales unopened to the sun.

Had thought been all, sweet speech had been denied.

Speech! ventilates our intellectual fire;

Speech! burnishes our mental magazine,

Brightens for ornament, or whets for use.

Teaching, we learn; and giving, we retain

The births of intellect; when dumb, forgot.”

It appears desirable, however, to consider language of more importance than the mere medium of communicating our ideas on ordinary occasions; for it is capable of *ornament to delight*, of *energy to persuade*, and of *transfusing* our opinions and views into, and thereby controlling and *directing*, in a measure, other minds. Such cultivation appears of benefit to society, and ought to receive from us its proper share of attention. Such a choice of language in debate would appear

desirable as would clothe the opinions which are advanced in a dress, if not in elegant and dignified, at least in perspicuous and lucid language; thereby commanding the greater attention to the views presented, and yielding increased satisfaction to our associates and friends.

As individuals have not always that part of an argument assigned to them in debate which corresponds with their views of the question under discussion, but are called upon to sustain opinions which they do not entertain, it would, under such circumstances, be proper and honorable to avoid all argumentative subtilty; and, the object being the elucidation of truth, to proceed no further in opposition to the rational and correct view of the subject than to elicit *all* the arguments that *can be introduced* to sustain the truth. A *manly exercise* of the *rational powers* will thus, on all occasions, characterize debate; and a right direction given to them in controlling the visionary flights of fancy, when used only to sustain sophistical reasoning, which, at best, could only attain the unenviable distinction of triumphant vanity.

The variety of subjects which will doubtless be introduced for discussion, and the variety of books to which, it is hoped, access will be given in this institution, will tend to stimulate assiduity, and give active employment to every faculty of the mind, at every convenient opportunity. They will engage the memory, the imagination, and the judgment; prove profitable exercises for its members, who, being associated for purposes of mutual interest, like the genial rain, though descending in *drops* only, they will unite and form a noble and clear stream, deepening and expanding the channel of valuable knowledge.

Ye ladies, if I should neglect your cause,
I should deserve to forfeit your applause.

To you, therefore, I would now desire to direct an appeal for your countenance of the objects contemplated by this institution:—that *you* discourage every approach for your *favours*

which may be made by the *vain* and the *ignorant*—those who evince by the trifling character of their conversation that their minds are a rude and *uncultivated* soil, where no valuable *branch* of *knowledge* has ever taken *root*, and from whence no *fruit* grateful to the *taste* of a *cultivated mind* can ever be gathered. You have a much *deeper personal interest* in this *matter* than you, perhaps, at *present perceive*. In what condition of society are your talents best appreciated? Are you not *gifted*, and by *nature designed* to be the *intellectual companions* of *intellectual beings*? In every department of literature, science, and general knowledge, your sex have *clearly demonstrated* an *intellectual equality*.

Suffer not, then, the *frothy* and *frivolous* of the other sex to lower you to their *degrading standard* of *intellectual imbecility*. Permit none but those who have *cultivated* minds, and who possess *enlightened* and *liberal principles*, to *obtain* your *friendship*. Your present ascendancy in society can only be *retained* by a *determination* on *your part* not to *permit* those who may become your companions for life, to *descend* in the *scale of intelligence*; and to encourage by *your approbation* those only who evince a determination on *their part* to *acquire* such an extent of *useful* and *entertaining knowledge*, as to become *intelligent* and *interesting companions*, and *worthy* of your *especial regard*.

Reason, that most distinctive and noblest faculty of man, the bright emanation of Infinite Intelligence, does *not appear* to prevail to an equal degree in every human mind. We are not all legislators, not all philosophers, not all historians, not all poets, not all men of science, not all familiar with the arts; but we *all* possess the *principles* of the *various faculties* by which *man* is *elevated* in the *scale of being*. We have not *all* the same *quickness of perception*, the same *sensation* and *reflection*, the same *power of association*, the same *memory*, the same *inventive imagination*, the same *power of judgment*; but we *ALL* possess, in a degree, *ALL* these

faculties. Some *few* individuals, however, are so *greatly* and especially *gifted with many* of these *faculties*, that *whatever matter* is submitted to the crucible of their mind, the *precious* is at once separated from the *vile*, the *gold* from the *alloy*, which is produced pure and unadulterated, indelibly impressed with the clear image of TRUTH, and bearing the bright superscription of pre-eminent mental greatness.

We should rejoice, however, in the consciousness that we are men, and remain satisfied with the mental powers we possess; for, though varying in character as do the countenances of our kind, they may be made conducive to our own and the public good.

By diligence in the proper cultivation of these faculties, they will strengthen and expand their various powers, and thereby enable each of us to contribute our portion of intellectual wealth to the general fund of knowledge.

“The first man was of the earth;” and we, his descendants, are formed and constantly sustained by partaking of its productions, which, by a hidden and curious process, are assimilated with, build up, and support our system; they are, therefore, essential to our present mode of existence. The mind, that emanation of the Deity, distinguishes man as the vicegerent of his Maker: sustaining that character and relation, the works and ways of our Creator command our attention. A certain portion of such knowledge is to us indispensable; and the larger portion of such knowledge that we attain, so much the better qualified, it would appear, we should be faithfully to discharge an authority, dominion, and trust so highly delegated. The more we apply ourselves to search them, the stronger and brighter to our minds will be the glorious manifestations of the ATTRIBUTES of the FIRST GREAT CAUSE, until, in the intensity of contemplation, “language is lost” in wonder and adoration!

The soul, a spark of all-creating and unbounded intelligence, existing

“When rolling years shall cease to move,”

must proceed in the attainment of a knowledge of the works and ways of its ever-existent Creator in eternal ages. Nearly two hundred generations of our kind have, agreeably to the accepted computation, been brought into being, and removed from this state of finite existence; yet how little is really known of the works of that hand

“That, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres,”

and “works in the secret deep!” Must we not conclude, therefore, that *eternity* only can suffice to investigate *eternal wonders!*

We are compelled here humbly to own “we know but in part;” but although an impenetrable veil appears cast over some of the avenues of knowledge, yet it is our high privilege, our duty, and our interest to use all the means within our reach for its acquisition:

“Till God’s own voice shall bid the curtain rise,
And all earth’s wonders open to our eyes.”

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

ANACOSTIA LYCEUM.

PREAMBLE.

We the subscribers, inhabitants of the city of Washington, believing it a duty incumbent upon every man to improve those reasoning faculties bestowed upon him by his beneficent Creator for the noblest purposes ; and believing that a well regulated Debating Society is calculated to further that desirable object, do hereby form ourselves into such society for that purpose, and pledge ourselves to support the following Constitution :

ARTICLE I.

This society shall be known and distinguished by the name of the ANACOSTIA LYCEUM.

ARTICLE II.

There shall be a President and two Vice Presidents chosen semi-annually, by ballot, who shall preside according to seniority at all meetings of the society, when ordinary business is under consideration.

ARTICLE III.

A Moderator shall be appointed for each question, whose duty it shall be to preside during the discussion of said question, to preserve order; and at the close of the debate he shall have the privilege of expressing his opinion on the merits of the question, and then collect the opinion of the society, and announce the decision.

ARTICLE IV.

There shall be a Secretary chosen semi-annually, (as the President,) whose duty it shall be to keep a regular record of the proceedings of this society.

ARTICLE V.

There shall be a Treasurer chosen semi-annually, (as the President,) whose duty it shall be to collect and receive the funds of this society, disburse the same upon the order of a majority of members present, when countersigned by the President and Secretary, and make to the society monthly exhibits of his receipts and expenditures.

ARTICLE VI.

Every person desirous of becoming a member of this society shall be nominated by a member, which nomination shall lay over until the next regular meeting of the society, when he shall be balloted for, and if two thirds of the number present be in his favor he shall be accepted, and pay for the use of this society the sum of twenty-five cents monthly, unless the whole or any part thereof shall be remitted by a vote of two thirds of the members present at the meeting.

ARTICLE VII.

Ten members of this society shall constitute a quorum for doing business.

ARTICLE VIII.

No member shall make any noise, or disturb the meeting, or interrupt another while speaking, (except for explanation,) or use any profane or indecent language in debate, or make use of expressions knowingly to wound the feelings of another, or shall question any member in any other place for language used in debate, under penalty of reprimand or expulsion, as two-thirds of the members present may deem proper to inflict.

ARTICLE IX.

No subject of religious tenets or party politics shall be debated in this society.

ARTICLE X.

There shall be held a regular meeting of this society once in each week, at one hour and a-half after sunset.

ARTICLE XI.

Whatever may be said by any member upon any subject for debate, at any stated meeting, shall be considered the private property of the society; and any member exposing the errors, or in any way ridiculing, after the meeting has adjourned, what may have been said by any member during debate, (except to the member privately,) shall be considered

as guilty of a high breach of confidence, and subject to expulsion from the society, or any other punishment the society may deem proper and expedient.

ARTICLE XII.

The anniversary meeting of this society shall be held on the evening of the 22d of February of each year; and the semi-annual meetings upon the first Tuesday of February and the first Tuesday of August in each year.

ARTICLE XIII.

This constitution may be amended by giving notice in writing one month previous, and two-thirds of the members present concurring in such amendment.

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY.

CLEMENT T. COOTE,	- -	<i>President.</i>
PETER M. PEARSON,	- -	<i>First Vice President.</i>
RICHARD BARRY,	- - -	<i>Second Vice President.</i>
CHARLES F. ELLIS,	- -	<i>Treasurer.</i>
JOHN L. CLUBB,	- - -	<i>Secretary.</i>
J. L. HENSHAW,	- - -	<i>Librarian.</i>
WM. SPEIDEN,		J. G. CASSIDY,
THOS. THORNLY,		C. G. BESTOR,
WM. LENOX,		JOSEPH WHITE,
J. W. FURGUSON,		JOHN G. YOUNG,
WM. M. ELLIS,		JAMES A. TAIT,
BERNARD O'DONNELL,		GEORGE DOVE,
WM. R. TAIT,		J. L. MADDOX,
WM. E. HOWARD,		JOHN TUCKER,
WM. E. CLARK,		WM. D. ACKEN,
DAVID BARRY,		EDWARD SIMMS,
JAS. MARSHALL,		ROBT. BARRY,
ROBT. COMBES,		JAS. G. COMBE,
WM. BLAND,		ALFRED HUME.

REGULATIONS OF THE LIBRARY.

ARTICLE I.

Section 1st. The Library shall be divided into shares, the right of property in which shall be transferable, with the approbation of the society; the value of which shall be paid

in monthly instalments of twenty-five cents each; and each and every year's subscription shall constitute a share.

Section 2d. Members shall not be entitled to the use of books, if at any time in debt the amount of three months' dues.

Section 3d. Proxies of members.

ARTICLE II.

Section 1st. There shall be a Library Committee, consisting of five, who shall be chosen semi-annually, by ballot; a majority of all the votes present necessary for a choice.

Section 2d. It shall be their duty to hold monthly meetings; to report their proceedings quarterly to this society; to record, for the future use of the library, such facts and observations relevant thereto as they may deem of consequence; to subscribe for, purchase, and receive such donations and loans of books as they may deem best calculated to enhance the interest of the library; and they shall draw on the Treasurer for the funds necessary for that purpose.

Section 3d. They shall fill up all vacancies that may occur in their number during the half year for which they are elected; make such by-laws for their own regulation, and establish such rules and regulations for the government of this society, not inconsistent with this plan, as they may deem expedient.

Section 4th. They shall not establish a reading room, but shall, under such regulations as they may deem best, permit members to take books from the library to their places of abode; and they shall be liable to removal from office on a vote of two-thirds of the members present.

ARTICLE III.

Section 1st. There shall be a Librarian chosen semi-annually, in the same manner as the Library Committee, whose duty it shall be to attend at the Library at such time as may be fixed on by the Library Committee, for the delivery of books to, and receiving the same from members; of which books he shall keep a register, showing the exact time when the same were taken from the library, and when returned.

Section 2d. He shall keep a separate account of all donations and loans of books made by individuals, showing the names of donors and lenders, and titles of books, respectively, and report the same monthly to the Library Committee.

Section 3d. He shall keep a list of stockholders, with the number of their shares respectively, and issue certificates thereof when requested.

Section 4th. In case of a vacancy occurring in the office of Librarian, the Library Committee shall fill it up in the same

manner and for the same time as provided for in case of vacancies occurring in their own number.

ARTICLE IV.

Section 1st. Members detaining books longer than the time prescribed by the Library Committee, injuring, or otherwise abusing them, shall be subject to a fine of not less than five cents, nor more than the value of the book or sets of books injured, as the Library Committee shall decide on.

Section 2d. Members refusing to pay such fine as is fixed on by the committee shall forfeit their right and interest in the Library, on the concurrence of two-thirds of all the votes given at a meeting of this society; provided notice, in writing, be given such offender or offenders, one week previous to sentence being passed.

ARTICLE V.

Section 1st. In the event of the dissolution of this society, the officers of this society, including the Library Committee and Librarian, shall deliver over all books and property then in their charge, belonging to this society, to three disinterested persons, as arbitrators, who shall be chosen by ballot: necessary to a choice, a majority of all the votes given.

Section 2d. Proxies to be admitted to vote for arbitrators; none but shareholders to vote for arbitrators.

Section 3d. Arbitrators thus chosen shall then distribute amidst holders of a share or shares, all such books and other property as is thus placed in their hands for distribution, by and belonging to the society, in an equal ratio, as near as possible, agreeably to the number of shares held by each respectively.

ARTICLE VI.

Section 1st. Holders of shares, in the event of a dissolution of this society, not claiming, in person or in writing, their share or shares, shall forfeit all right in the same; provided notice be given of such dissolution and intended distribution, in one of the newspapers published in Washington city, three times, one month previous to such distribution taking place.

Section 2d. Persons loaning books for the use of this society shall be at liberty to withdraw them at pleasure.

COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY.

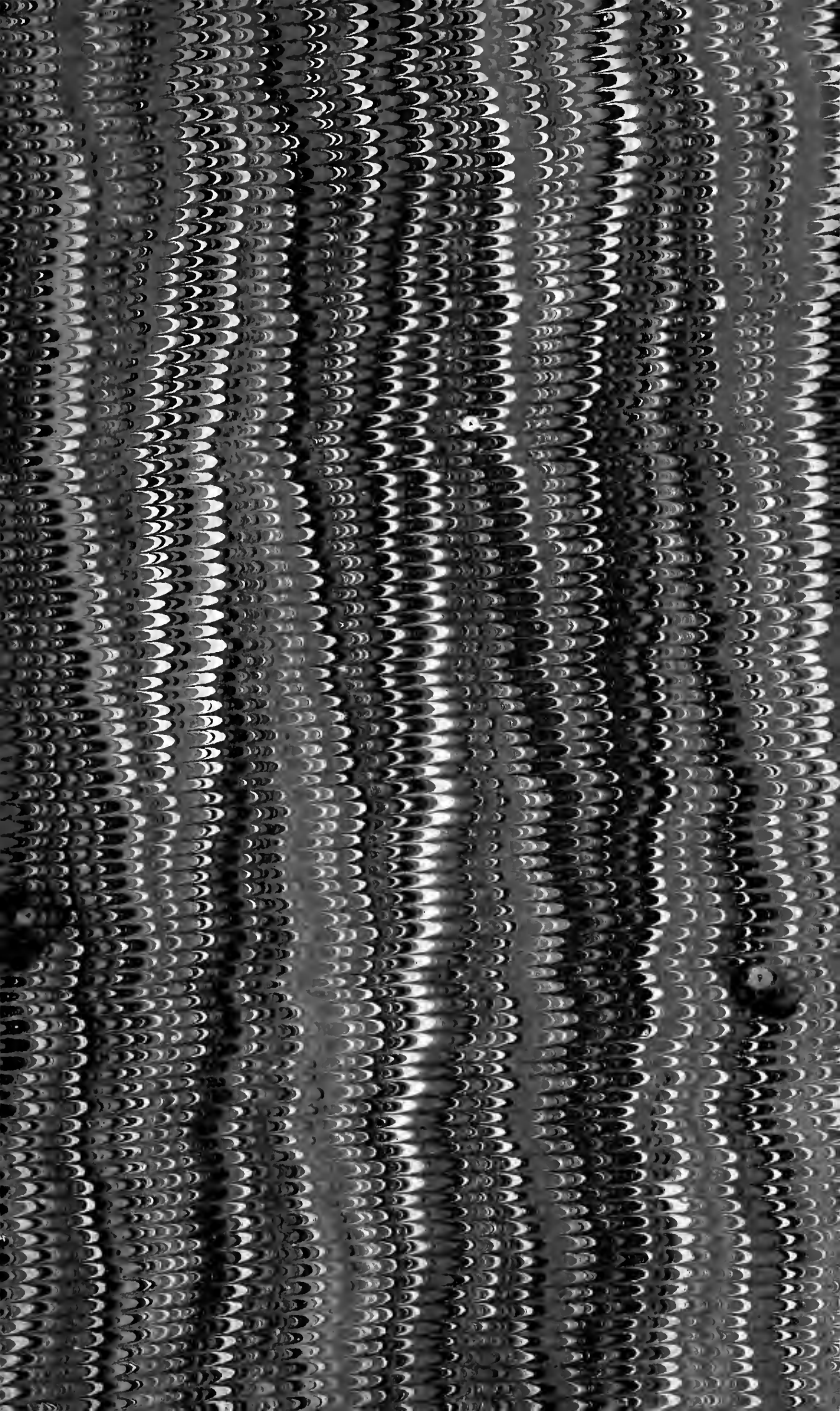
J. L. HENSHAW, <i>Librarian</i> .	J. G. CASSIDY,
WM. SPEIDEN,	C. G. BESTOR, and
THOS. THORNTLY,	WM. LENOX.







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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



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